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AUTHENTIC LETTERS

FROM

ITALY.

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FROM ITALY.

Vacate & videte.—Ps. xlv. v. 10.

LONDON:

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M DCC XCVI.

THE Public is here preſented with authentic letters giving an account of circumſtances, which, even in the æra of prodigious events, deſerve particular attention.

If the facts they relate be true, it has pleaſed Almighty God to manifeſt himſelf, in our times, by a miraculous interpoſition of his divine power, in a moſt public and wonderful manner.

It is not a ſolitary fact, that has happened in the preſence of a few, or of perſons prediſpoſed to believe it. It has paſt in many places, before many thouſand ſpectators, and many of them, the moſt likely of all men to deny it, to doubt it, and to ridicule it.

The writers of the letters which relate it, are known to be perſons of honour, virtue and integrity. They aſſert themſelves to be eye-witneſſes of the facts; and call on the univerſal teſtimony of the cities and towns where they reſide, to depoſe to the truth of their narratives.

Extract of a Letter, dated Ancona del Maria, July 9 and 10, 1796.

RELIGIOUS ſenſibility will be greatly affected by the recital of prodigies which have paſſed here within a fortnight, and of which we are ocular witneſſes at every hour of the day and the night. No art, no fallacy can find a plea to deny them; and the unbeliever, the heretic, the Turk and the Jew, after the moſt ſerious inveſtigation of the truth of theſe facts, bear ample teſtimony to them. Many are already come from the diſtance of thirty and forty miles. Whole congregations would come from Rome, but in the preſent critical circumſtances the Pope withholds his aſſent; but his Holineſs being acquainted with the particulars was ſenſibly affected, and ſaid: *I am old, but this makes me young again.* But the greateſt of prodigies conſiſts in the converſion of ſinners, in reconciliations, reſtitutions, &c. Our Cardinal Biſhop has already publiſhed a relation of them, and other hands are employed to give a more extenſive and more authentic publicity to theſe events.

This

This town being threatened with an invaſion from the French, on account of its port, the moſt conſiderable in the Papal dominions, found itſelf deſtitute of the means of defence; no preparations had been made by government; the people, without any fixed ſyſtem, were the dupes of the profligate and the needy; who had formed the project of a general maſſacre, which was to begin at midnight on Saturday between the 25th and 26th of June. A great number of ſailors had entered into this conſpiracy, and the better to ſecure their ſhare of the plunder, which would undoubtedly have taken place on the occaſion, had ſome days before embarked their effects, and given orders to their wives to hold themſelves in readineſs to obey the ſignal for going aboard their boats, in order, as they pretended, to eſcape from the French. The women were alarmed, they ran about in groups, repeating and bewailing their hard fate. After commnnicating what each had heard from her huſband, the general concluſion was that ſome great event was near at hand. This claſs of females, always particularly devout to a miraculous image of the Bleſſed Virgin placed in the Cathedral, after working ſeveral miracles, ran firſt to his Eminence to demand the open-

ſing of the coffin, which contains the uncorrupted body of a holy biſhop of this ſee in the 15th century, whoſe beatification we celebrated laſt May. Their petition is granted, and they run in crouds to the Cathedral to invoke his protection, till it was time to ſing the litanies, which is done every Saturday at the altar of the bleſſed Virgin. Never was prayer more fervently addreſſed to heaven. As they continued to implore the interceſſion of Mary, a little child who, contrary to cuſtom, appeared to be very devout and recollected, cried out to his mother; the Holy Virgin moves her eyes. The mother looks and beholds the prodigy. Others leſs liable to be deceived do the ſame. Nothing is now heard but the effuſions of joy and ſurprize; in an inſtant the miraculous fact is ſpread over the whole town. It was received by ſome as a fable, others laughed heartily at the credulity of the ſpectators, while the coffee houſes rang with the pleaſantry and the indecent mirth of the thoughtleſs and the idle. However many undertook to clear up the myſtery and judge for themſelves. On their return, they own their conviction of the truth of what they had heard and had now ſeen. The ſcoffer and the libertine now hold a different

language,

language, and are not aſhamed publicly to aſk pardon for their profane and ludicrous animadverſions they had made on this miraculous fact. The ſtreets are ſoon thronged with groups of people hurrying to the Cathedral, and reciting the litanies and their beads. The ringleaders of the conſpiracy, aſtoniſhed at the prodigy, throw themſelves at the feet of their confeſſors, lay down their arms on the altars, and implore the forgiveneſs of thoſe whom they had marked out as the freſh victims of their fury. The church door could not be ſhut, but remained open till yeſterday evening, the thirteenth day. On the next day, Sunday June 26, the public voice demanded, that the image ſhould be carried in ſolemn proceſſion through the town. There was no time to give public notice; but in an inſtant eccleſiaſtical chapters, religious communities, corporations, confraternities, the nobility, the magiſtrates, compoſing a body of one thouſand perſons, form the moſt orderly and the moſt edifying proceſſion I have ever beheld. Every one carried a flambeau, the manufactures of wax, though abundantly ſupplied, were ſoon exhauſted, and they were obliged to have recourſe to the treaſury of the churches. It was a fine ſerene day, and not one of the flambeaux

was

was extinguiſhed. This happened a fortnight ago, and the ſtreets are ſtill covered with wax, as if it was juſt over. Since this general proceſſion, which was performed barefooted, many others have been undertaken night and day, and have been attended by the different confraternities. No orders were iſſued, no directions given, and yet every thing was conducted in the moſt orderly and regular manner. Illuminations appeared in every houſe in the ſtreet which runs through the town to the cathedral, where voluntary offerings were made. The wax alone already amounts to 5000lb. Many preſented jewels, gold, ſilver, diamonds, pearls, watches, gold chains, &c. money, poniards, ſtillettos and piſtols.

Our Cardinal Biſhop very prudently ordered the church door to be ſhut for the firſt time yeſterday at 10 o'clock at night, after giving benediction, reading aloud the beads and ſinging the litanies. He ordered the bleſſed ſacrament to be expoſed till next Sunday, and the bodies of the holy biſhops protectors of the town remain uncovered and expoſed to the veneration of the faithful. As to myſelf, my dear friend, from Saturday the 25th, till the 28th at midnight, I believed the miracle

miracle but only on the teſtimony of others. The painful ſituation I was in during that period did not permit me to viſit the cathedral till after midnight; I walked with difficulty, was much fatigued and greatly incommoded by the heat of the candles which ſurrounded the altar. However, I was very deſirous of having the comfort of ſeeing this prodigy, that I might have in my power to atteſt the truth of it to the greater glory of Mary; but as I am very ſhort-ſighted, it was neceſſary I ſhould place myſelf near the picture, and ſcreen my eyes from the glare of the ſurrounding tapers. I ſet out on the Eve of St. Peter a little before midnight; the ſoldiers opened the entrance into the vacant ſpace behind the altar which ſeparates it entirely from the picture. There I ſaw firſt with my naked eye, and afterwards by the help of my ſpectacles, the eyes of the bleſſed Virgin painted on the canvaſs, 1. move horizontally, as if they had been animated; 2. open wider than uſual, of which I was able to judge from having often ſaid Maſs at that altar; 3. ſhut quite cloſe ſo that the hair of the upper eye-lid hung down over the under one. I obſerved thoſe changes take place twice in the ſpace of a quarter of an hour that I remained

mained there. I roſe from my knees and walked home full of comfort: but it ſoon occurred to me that I ſhould gain little credit with the ſceptic, who would object the time of night when I ſhould be naturally very drowſy, or bewildered by the multiplicity of ſurrounding lights. I determined to try the experiment by broad day-light, and the next day being the Feaſt of St. Peter, preciſely at mid-day I again entered behind the altar. Here I took a different poſition from that which I had occupied the preceding night, and I clearly ſaw both with my naked eye and with the aſſiſtance of my ſpectacles the ſame changes take place. I am ready when properly called upon to make affidavit of theſe facts, and in the mean time I do aſſure you that all that I have hitherto written is literally true.

Signed,

DESCHAMPS de la MAGDELAINE,
Formerly Vicar General and Canon of Lyon.

P. S. As meaſures are taking to give to the public an authentic ſtatement of this miraculous fact, yeſterday and the day before three painters were called in, men eminent in their

their profeſſion and of acknowledged probity. I myſelf know them to be ſo. The Vicar General, attended by the proper officers, deſired them to take down the picture, and to examine it in every part. They took out the glaſs, put their hands on the face, and particularly on the eyes, in order to ſee if there was any hollow. No ſooner was the hand removed from the eyes than they opened widely. The painters ſtood petrified at the ſight, and were ſo ſtrongly affected that they could take no nouriſhment all that day. A celebrated artiſt in painting on wood was preſent, and was ſo impreſſed with awe and veneration, that taking from his finger a diamond ring valued at 2,000 French livres, he placed it himſelf in the crown of the bleſſed Virgin. He then haſtens to the ſacriſty, and enters into a bond to contribute 2,500 livres towards any decoration that might be judged proper for this picture. A Turk was curious to ſee the prodigy, and ſeeing it, he ſaid in Italian; Woman, thou moveſt thy eyes: and putting his hand to his ſcymeter, which was richly ornamented, ſaid to his attendant; Give her this.

So ſtriking and ſo conſtant an interpoſition of Providence has not yet found a place

in hiſtory. This has been accompanied by circumſtantial prodigies of a very extraordinary nature. I will mention but one which will put your faith to the teſt, and yet it is well authenticated. But I ſtop; I am not ſufficiently informed of the detail, and I will hazard nothing of my own. I have juſt ſeen one of the painters, Joſeph Palaviccini, aged 55 years, who had not recovered from his aſtoniſhment, and who aſſured me that what ſtruck him moſt was to feel the eyes move under his fingers as if they belonged to a living body.

The miracles related in an extract of ſeveral letters from ANCONA and ROME of June 25, and July 1, 6, 8, 9, are fully confirmed by three printed tracts; one entitled, *Extract of a letter from Ancona, June 27*; the other two, *An account of the miraculous movements of the eyes of a picture of our Lady in the cathedral church of Ancona.*

THE firſt of theſe relations is dated July 6, and the ſecond July 1. That of the 6th, after

ter an enumeration of the various miracles ſtated in the foregoing extract, proceeds thus: "Ten days and ten nights have now paſſed "away, and ſtill the holy Virgin and St. Ann "continue to favour this town with evident "marks of protection, not only to us, but to "a great concourſe of ſtrangers who reſort "hither from the neighbouring cities and "caſtles. Though this miracle has been pub-"liſhed to this and the neighbouring pro-"vinces, though it has been and is ſtill ſeen "by thouſands, though it be atteſted by men "of the higheſt rank, the moſt diſtinguiſhed "character, men of the beſt informed minds "and the ſtricteſt integrity, yet the eccleſiaſ-"tical court has thought proper to draw up "an authentic ſtatement in order to perpetu-"ate the memory of it, and to encourage the "devotion of the faithful towards the Queen "of Saints and her mother St. Ann."

This ſhort account is publiſhed by order and with the approbation of his Eminence our Biſhop, to the greater glory of the holy Virgin.

ANCONA, JULY 6, 1796.

In the relation dated July 1ſt is the following paragraph: "This relation was alrea-

" dy printed and publiſhed before the firſt
" ſteps were taken to aſcertain the fact by a
" juridical examination of the picture, in or-
" der to remove every ſuſpicion of fraud
" and colluſion. For this purpoſe about
" noon on the 6th of this month, the Vicar
" General went to the cathedral attended by
" the epiſcopal notary and three painters.
" The picture was taken down, the glaſs was
" removed in the preſence of the ſaid wit-
" neſſes, and after the painters had made eve-
" ry enquiry and tried every experiment,
" nothing was found but the canvaſs perfectly
" ſound in all its parts, without the leaſt ap-
" pearance or even poſſibility of deceit. It
" was then matter of great ſurprize to ſee
" the picture which the Grand Vicar held in
" his hand in order to have full view of it,
" open its eyes in a moſt extraordinary man-
" ner. The painters were aſtoniſhed, but at
" the ſame time they were filled with ſpiritual
" joy and comfort. One of the witneſſes
" preſent moved to devotion drew a ring of
" conſiderable value from his finger, and pla-
" ced it in the crown which reſts on the head
" of the bleſſed Virgin. The ſame painters
" proceeded to examine the ſtatue of St.
" Ann, but could not diſcover the leaſt veſ-

" tige

" tige of art or contrivance. In ſhort, this " is the 16th day ſince theſe prodigies have " been repeated at ſtated intervals, and fill " the world with admiration and joy."

ANCONA, JULY 10.

By permiſſion of ſuperiors.

Extract of ſeveral Letters from Rome, dated July, from the 1ſt to the 16th.

AFTER giving you ſome account of the prodigies which came to my knowledge from the reports of others, I proceed with heartfelt ſatisfaction to ſtate ſuch as I have ſeen myſelf. On Saturday morning ſome devout people being in prayer before a picture of our Lady of Archetto, it was obſerved to open and ſhut its eyes. The report ſoon ran through the ſtreets of Rome, and many flocked to pay their homage to it. I was one of the number, and paſſing by a picture in the ſtreets I found many pious people crying aloud; *Moſt holy Virgin, favour us with a miracle.* Scarce had

had they pronounced the words, when their petition was granted in my preſence. We immediately intoned the *Te Deum* and the *Litanies*, which were interrupted by the tears and heartfelt ſighs of the company.

We proceeded to viſit all the other pictures, of which there is a great number in the ſtreets. Moſt of them ſhut their eyes, opened them, turned them ſometimes towards heaven, ſometimes towards the INFANT JESUS, and then towards the people. From this moment the miracle is repeated almoſt without interruption. I will not attempt to deſcribe the effects which it has produced. I will only tell you that Rome exhibits no faint reſemblance of Paradiſe. The ſtreets and public places are deſerted, unleſs devotion draws people thither to honour the pictures of our Lady which are found there and in private houſes, which exhibit the ſame prodigies. Theſe are at all times ſurrounded by an immenſe crowd, who alternately ſing the litanies and ſpiritual canticles. In every ſtreet, both night and day, we hear nothing but fervent invocations of the bleſſed Mary. Miſſions are eſtabliſhed in all the ſquares, which are attended by a vaſt concourſe of people. The aſſaſſin, the revolutioniſt

tioniſt and the atheiſt all crowd to confeſſional, and it is no uncommon thing to hear penitents making public confeſſions in the ſquares and the churches. At night every window has two lights in it, and the poor deny themſelves their common nouriſhment in order to purchaſe oil. Lamps are now burnt becauſe we have no more tallow candles. This illumination as well as the miſſion will laſt at leaſt ten days. Yeſterday the ſame prodigies were exhibited by the pictures of our Lady in the churches, and eſpecially in the new church of the Phillippians, which was open all night, becauſe there were continual proceſſions of men and women, in ſeparate bodies, who walked barefoot and with the moſt becoming modeſty. I was witneſs of them, and could not help admiring the regularity and good order obſerved by an aſſemblage of thouſands, though there was neither conſtable nor ſentinel to command reſpect. Their recollected air and their canticles would have pierced the hardeſt hearts. Many devout perſonages in this city aſſure us that theſe prodigies are only forerunners of a ſtill more aſtoniſhing miracle which will ſoon take place, and which will fill our hearts with ſpiritual joy and conſolation. It ſeems

as if God were determined to reſtore religion to its ancient luſtre, and morality to its primitive purity. The ſame miracles have taken place at Civita Vecchia, and I am perſuaded they will happen almoſt every where. I proceed to ſome others.

The Flowers de Leuce had been ſuſpended near a picture at l'Arco de Pantani ſo long ago that they were withered and dry. The other day I obſerved a freſh green bud on each of them, though they are expoſed to the ſcorching heat of the ſun. They open gradually, as if they had never decayed. The leaves and the ſtalks remained in the ſame withered ſtate. But now the ſtalks grow green, as I can witneſs from a clear and diſtinct view of them. . . . . At Viterbo the body of St. Roſe has been covered with an abundant perſpiration. . . . . In the March in the neighbourhood of Mandola an illumined croſs with three flower de leuce's was obſerved in the air, and to reſt on Loretto. The authentic proofs of thoſe facts, confirmed by oath, have been tranſmitted to the Sacred Congregation of Rites.

JULY 16.

The miracles wrought by the bleſſed Virgin ſtill continue and increaſe in number. Prodigies appear as often as fervent prayers are offered before her ſtatues. They have been obſerved at Sutri, at Anagni, at Fraſcati and Perugia.

A miracle never fails when ſhe is approached with a lively faith. The devotion of the people is warm, and converſions frequent. Not a day paſſes but the moſt remarkable changes take place. The ſtreets are become ſacred as the cloyſter. The flower de leuces continue to vegetate as if planted in the moſt favourable ſoil. A few days will probably complete their expanſion. Something very particular has happened at Perugia. Three refulgent ſtars were ſeen on the cheeks of the Virgin, and on the forehead of the infant Jeſus whom ſhe held in her arms. Many blind, dumb and lame, have been miraculouſly cured. My friends, this will be a memorable epoch. We have no example of ſuch a multiplicity of prodigies; their frequency is ſuch, that they have almoſt ceaſed to create any extraordinary ſenſation in the beholders. But admirable are the

fruits which they produce. At a general communion at Ancona fourteen thouſand hoſts were conſumed.

A Lady of quality at Munſter, having obtained leave from the Internuncio to ſend theſe accounts to her daughter at London, adds the following reflections.

Theſe, my Dear, are the beginning of the mercy of God towards ſinners. Let us hope to be of the happy number. This is the only real counter-revolution. All the reſt is folly and deluſion. Let us addreſs ourſelves with redoubled fervour to the bleſſed Virgin, imploring her protection for our unhappy country. Let us beg an increaſe of zeal in her ſervice. Let us not be aſhamed to publiſh theſe prodigies. I know it is blaſphemy to hawk about counterfeit miracles, becauſe God is truth itſelf, and cannot ſanction a lie; but when facts are fairly authenticated, it behoves us to publiſh them to the greater glory of God, and our own ſatisfaction. The writer of this letter is a prieſt of the Congregation of Rites at Rome, and it is addreſſed to the

Inter-

Internuncio here. The firſt miracle was wrought at Ancona, on the 25th or 26th of June. The people apprehenſive of being invaded by the French, were aſſembled at prayer in the church, when a child about three years old firſt ſaw and proclaimed the prodigy. *Mammy*, ſays he to his mother, *the holy Virgin has heard your prayer.*

Extract of a letter written by Dr. JOHN CHARLES BONOMI, *Antient Profeſſor of Theology in Propaganda, to his Brother, No. 76, Great Titchfield-ſtreet, London; dated* Rome, *July* 16, 1796.

I NOW come to give you an account of things that will not be believed in London, though they are inconteſtable truths of *fact*. During theſe laſt eight days many images of the bleſſed Virgin, and now ſome crucifixes have been ſeen to open their eyes and caſt them towards the people, and then ſhut them repeatedly and ſenſibly. I am not an eye-witneſs myſelf, both becauſe my ſight is im-

perfect, as well as becauſe I happened not to be preſent in any of thoſe happy moments when ſuch things were ſeen, nor had I time to ſtay long enough to ſee them. But my work of criticiſm on miracles, contained in the ſynopſis I have publiſhed, is ſo accurate and rigid, that it renders me a competent and ſafe judge. I have been aſſured of the fact by perſons who at firſt for ſome days denied it, becauſe they had not ſeen it themſelves, or becauſe it only ſeemed to them to be ſo; but ſince have aſſerted the reality of it, after repeated experience and the niceſt obſervation. Theſe perſons are neither women nor clergymen, but people of the world. The prodigy has not been ſeen in any of thoſe pictures that are the moſt reſpected, excluſive of that of the Madonna del Archetto, in which it was ſeen for the firſt time on Saturday at 10 o'clock. It was ſeen in the neglected pictures that are about the ſtreets; then it went on multiplying itſelf in churches, but only in thoſe pictures that have nothing particular to recommend them. Beſides the effect it has produced is alone proof ſufficient. It is incredible that the people, who were only taken up with thoughts of the French, ſhould not have immediately concluded it to

be

be a ſign of their being to be liberated from them; but no: the effects were a ſincere repentance, reconciliations of enemies, bad habits ſhaken of, immediate reſtitutions, without mentioning confeſſions, and public ſigns of penance. The next day, at the requeſt of the people, the miſſions began in public places. The croud is incredible. At the end of the ſermon, vaſt numbers of people formed themſelves into proceſſions, ſinging hymns in veneration to the pictures, but with ſuch order and regularity, that I hardly believe that there was even one handkerchief loſt. There breathed every fervor and repentance: thoſe who edified the moſt, and excited the moſt compaſſion, were the moſt diſſolute among workmen, butchers, carters, porters, &c. They were in earneſt, and the firſt thing they did was to hang by thoſe pictures their forbidden weapons, or they reſigned them to their confeſſors.

P. S. I had forgot to tell you that the prodigy of the pictures began in Ancona; and now it is ſeen in almoſt all the country in the environs of Rome.

Extract

Extract of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Griffiths, St. George's Fields.

REV. SIR,

I SHALL not trouble you with an account of the invaſion of the Pope's territories by the French; but I cannot fail noticing to you the following fact, that has happened in this city, and which will aſtoniſh all the world. Saturday the 9th, a celebrated picture of the bleſſed Virgin, called la Madonna de l'Archetto was ſeen by ſeveral perſons to open and ſhut its eyes and put on a melancholy aſpect. This was followed with the ſame effect by about twenty other pictures in different parts of the city. An immenſe concourſe of people flocked to ſee this miracle, who all returned fully perſuaded of its truth, and highly penetrated with compunction. I myſelf can teſtify to have ſeen this miracle in four different pictures. The effect it produced on me then was a kind of holy horror, that made my hair ſtand almoſt upright: even now, while I am penning this acconnt, it has the ſame effect upon me. The number of converſions

it

it has wrought is aſtoniſhing. Nothing is heard but lamentations, nothing ſeen but proceſſions of penance.....

I am,

With all reſpect and eſteem, &c.

Engliſh College,
Rome, July 19. 1796.

STEPHEN GREEN.

Copy of a Letter from Rome, July 22.

IN my laſt of the 9th inſtant, I gave you ſome account of the miracles which have been wrought by means of ſome pictures of our bleſſed Lady. Theſe are real prodigies, and have produced the moſt beneficial effects, devotion, penitence, and the converſion of ſinners. Similar events have taken place, from the ſame date, at Rome, and other places in the Eccleſiaſtical State. Several pictures of the bleſſed Virgin have been ſeen to open their eyes, to raiſe them towards heaven, and then to ſhut them not once only, but ſeveral times, and in the preſence of witneſſes who

who were never ſuſpected of an eaſy credulity. The ſame has happened to images of our Lord and crucifixes. Miraculous cures are wrought, and people born lame recover the free uſe of their limbs. We have not ſeen theſe prodigies ourſelves, as we were not at the places where and times when they were wrought. But beſides the concurrent teſtimony of the public, ſeveral perſons, on whoſe veracity we can rely, have aſſured us that they had the cleareſt evidence of the fact. Among others is a learned and judicious prelate, and ſeveral prieſts and religious men, both French and Italian. No art, no contrivance or colluſion could here ſcreen the impoſtor, who would have been diſcovered, and would have ſuffered impriſonment, as others have done, for circulating falſe miracles.

One thing we ourſelves have ſeen, which ſome indeed are willing to attribute to the natural proceſs of vegetation, but which we and many others aſcribe to a ſupernatural agency. Three flower de luces, without root, had formerly been nailed on each ſide of a picture of the Virgin. I was aſſured that one or two of them had been ſuſpended there for two or three years, and the third for one month. They were all equally withered and dry.

dry. But on the 9th of this month, we ſaw, on the ſtalk to the right ſide of the picture, a bud perfectly freſh and green, and promiſing a ſpeedy expanſion. The ſame thing happened to the other two on the left. They puſhed forth three ſmaller buds of a beautiful green. The colour is ſtill freſh at the end of a fortnight, notwithſtanding the intenſe heat and uncommon drought. This attracts crowds of people to pray before this and other pictures.

But the effects produced by theſe prodigies is the ſtrongeſt and the moſt unequivocal proof of a ſupernatural interpoſition of the Supreme Being. They have excited fervour and devotion, have procured a general reformation of manners, have baniſhed ſcandal, and have produced numerous converſions and works of penitence. This wonderful change was no ſooner repreſented to the Pope, than he was pleaſed to order ſome experienced miſſionaries, who are always at hand, to undertake a miſſion the next day, the 10th, and to preach in the ſix principal ſquares at the ſame hour. It was to conclude on the 20th, but has been prolonged to the 26th. This city has often witneſſed ſimilar miſſions, but the oldeſt inhabitants aſſure us, that they ne-

ver attracted an equal concourſe of people, or produced the like effects. We attend the ſervice in the ſquare neareſt to our reſidence. It is large and always full; no church could contain ſuch numbers; but ſuch is the ſilent attention to the ſermon, that the preacher is diſtinctly heard from one extremity to the other. The ſermon finiſhed, an awful pauſe enſues, and, falling into groups, they retire, ſinging aloud the beads or other prayers. The ſame ſcene takes place in the other ſquares notwithſtanding the exceſſive heats which now prevail. But prayer is not all; ſcandals are removed, enemies are reconciled, reſtitutions are made; in a word Rome is univerſally changed, and the confeſſionals are crowded by penitents.

Yeſterday, to-day and to-morrow were the days appointed for penitential proceſſions in order to atone for former ſcandals. On each of theſe days two proceſſions ſet out from two of the ſquares where miſſion is held, each paying a viſit to one of the principal churches of Rome. As theſe churches could not contain half the number, a repoſitory is erected at the principal door, and when the whole proceſſion is arrived, the bleſſed ſacrament is placed on it. We yeſterday beheld from our

windows

windows that which ſet out from the ſquare which we attend. The Vicar-General, who is charged with the government of the dioceſe of Rome, was at the head of it, carrying the croſs, and accompanied by ſeveral prelates. No one appeared in the ſacred veſtments, but the clergy and the religious men walked with thoſe of every profeſſion without diſtinction, and the women followed. At the head of theſe was the Princeſs Barbarini, carrying a copy of the picture of Ancona, where theſe prodigies firſt appeared. The throng was ſo great, that it was impoſſible to form them into regular ranks. They marched in groups, forming a front of fifteen or twenty perſons abreaſt, preceded by ſome eccleſiaſtics of the ſecular or regular clergy, who ſung ſome ſpiritual canticles, and were anſwered by the reſt. Some interval was left between the different groups. This confuſion of ranks, princes, nobles, labourers, prieſts, all aſſuming the garb and attitude of ſinners, had ſomething in it extremely ſtriking. There were more men than women. Many walked barefoot. All ſeemed perfectly recollected and penetrated with the deepeſt compunction. It was a full hour before all had paſſed our houſe. When the women were all paſſed, another group of

men appeared forming the rear. There we joined, and went to the door of St. Mary Major to offer our prayers, and receive benediction. Every thing was conducted with the greateſt order and decorum. The proceſſion might now be ſaid to be at an end, and the people at liberty to return to their reſpective homes. However their return reſembled a fervent proceſſion; the ſame prayers, the ſame muſic and the ſame recollection. The fruits produced by this miſſion encourage to hope for the tranquillity of this country.

It is the general opinion here, that the prodigies wrought in this and other cities of the Eccleſiaſtical State by the pictures of the holy Virgin, who is in high veneration, promiſe her eſpecial protection of this country. This opinion is grounded on the following circumſtances; 1°. the French were to march to Ancona, but they have not ſtirred, and perhaps will not. 2°. Two or three days after the appearance of theſe prodigies a miraculous diſcovery was made of a horrid conſpiracy ready to break out, to overturn the government, and to lay the city in aſhes. Theſe circumſtances give vigor and confidence to the people of Rome. The religious orders and the confraternities will make their reſpective

tive proceſſions on the 24th, 25th and 26th in the morning. The miſſions will be continued in the evening.

The other general proceſſions, which took place within theſe few days, were not leſs edifying or leſs numerous than that which we attended. One of them indeed exceeded all the reſt. Four Cardinals walked in front, and Princeſs Colonna carried the picture of our Lady.

Extract of a Letter to Mr. BURKE *of Dyott-Street, London, from his Son, a Student in Philoſophy at Rome.*

. . . . I paſs to the preſent ſituation of Rome. The greateſt prodigies are ſeen here every day. Many pictures of the bleſſed Virgin Mary have been ſeen to open and ſhut their eyes, of which prodigy I have been eye-witneſs two or three times, and they ſtill continue. Some ſtatues of ſaints have altered their poſition: ſome crucifixes have likewiſe opened their eyes; for which reaſon Rome is turned into a ſecond Ninive. And his Holineſs ſeeing the devotion of the people, has ordered

ordered ſermons to be preached in the public ſquares for the ſpace of eight days, public proceſſions alſo to take place after for three days, and on the expiration thereof a re-preaching of the ſermons for three other days. You certainly cannot form any idea of the change that has taken place. Wherever you go, you ſee nothing but proceſſions of penance. Our college went laſt Thurſday in one of theſe proceſſions to St. Peter's, in which there were more than forty thouſand perſons. The artizans always work, ſaying or ſinging ſome hymns in honor of the bleſſed Virgin. I had almoſt forgot to tell you, that ſome Engliſh gentlemen have been converted by the aforeſaid prodigies. Many Jews have likewiſe been converted.....

I remain,

Dear Father,

Your moſt dutiful Son,

Engliſh College,
Rome, July 23, 1796.

JOHN BURKE.

Extract

Extract of a Letter from the Rev. Robert Smelt, to Mrs. Canning, dated Rome, July 23d, 1796.

THE good people of Rome are become very pious. Several pictures of the Madonnas opened and ſhut their eyes. This miracle firſt began at Ancona, afterwards at other places, and lately at Rome. I ſaw one picture cloſe its eyes, at leaſt I thought ſo: however, ſeveral perſons of undoubted veracity affirm poſitively that they have ſeen the ſame repeatedly. Some of the beſt preachers in Rome held forth in the great Piazzas, exhorting the people to repentance during fourteen days; the ſpirit of penance and mortification came upon people of all deſcriptions; even ladies of the firſt rank, who united with the vulgar in penitential proceſſions, walking barefoot to churches at conſiderable diſtance.

Copy

Copy of a Letter to the Rev. Mr. MILNER *of Wincheſter, from the above mentioned* Mr. STEPHEN GREEN, *a convert to the Roman Catholic faith, Sub-deacon and Sudent in Divinity, at the Engliſh College of Rome.*

REV. SIR,

YOU will naturally expect to hear nothing from this part of the world but the hiſtory of battles, ſieges, and cities taken by ſtorm. Certainly I could find ſufficient matter for this ſubject; but I have another, which is of more importance, and will be more pleaſing to you.

Saturday the 9th, a celebrated picture of the bleſſed Virgin, called La-Madonna de l'Archetto was ſeen by ſeveral perſons to open and ſhut its eyes, and put on a very melancholy aſpect. This was followed by about twenty pictures in different parts of the city; all of which opened and ſhut their eyes in a moſt miraculous manner. An immenſe concourſe of people flocked to ſee this miraculous effect; and all returned perſuaded of its truth, and highly penetrated with compunction. I

myſelf

myſelf can reſtify to have ſeen this miracle in four different pictures. But how ſhall I deſcribe to you my feelings on this occaſion? I could ſcarce ſtand on my legs. I returned thanks to God for having brought me to the knowledge of a religion under the ſpecial protection of ſuch a Patroneſs. I bleſſed you, and I bleſſed the day that firſt brought me to Wincheſter.

The miracle, I think, is inconteſtable. It is not atteſted by a few fanatics, or credulous women; it is atteſted by an entire city (a few excepted) of 160000 ſouls; it is not only atteſted by Catholics; it is atteſted by profeſſional atheiſts: and ſeven Jews, with a Proteſtant Engliſh gentleman, have been converted by it. It cannot be the effect of an heated imagination; its duration of twelve days has given time to reflect and examine it cooly.

The effects it has produced exceed all imagination: the confeſſionals are continually full, the moſt hardened ſinners have been converted, inveterate enemies have been reconciled: nothing is heard but lamentations, nothing ſeen but proceſſions of penance. One, which I attended yeſterday, was compoſed of perſons of all ranks to the amount of

30,000. In one word, Rome at preſent exhibits a moſt perfect picture of Niniveh in the time of Jonas.

Our preſent ſituation is very precarious on account of the French, but certainly it would ill become us to fear after God has favoured us with ſuch graces.

Your moſt obedient and humble Servant,

Engliſh College,
Rome, July 29. 1796.

STEPHEN GREEN.

Whatever may be the merit of the above letters or extracts, it muſt all reſt for the preſent on the ſeparate or united teſtimony of the individuals who penned the accounts. Higher authority, as in every department, has no ſanction to give, till it is properly and officially informed from abroad.

The neceſſity of uſhering the above individual teſtimony rather ſooner, will appear beſt from the many abſurd miſrepreſentations ſo freely ſcattered in our papers on the ſubject

jeſt in queſtion. The public may now examine the whole more impartially, and judge for itſelf.

The extracts of four more letters from Rome might be added, viz. one of the 23d July, three of the 30th ditto; but as they are all and each from the ſame pens among the above, it will be ſufficient to declare here, they all confirm or illuſtrate their former aſſertions.——Some names are omitted barely not to involve their friends in the enemies country.